

REMARKS

In the Office Action of June 22, 2007, the drawings were objected to “because conventional features illustrated in the drawing as rectangular boxes must be labeled. See 37 CFR 1.83(a).” In addition, claims 1 and 5 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by U.S. Patent Number 6,034,603 (hereinafter “Steeves”). Furthermore, claims 1-17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as allegedly being anticipated by U.S. Patent Application Number 2003/0007473 A1 (hereinafter “Strong et al.”).

With respect to the drawing objection, Applicants note herein that 37 C.F.R. 1.83(a) states that “conventional features disclosed in the description and claims, where their detailed illustration is not essential for a proper understanding of the invention, **should** be illustrated in the drawing in the form of a graphical drawing symbol or a labeled representation (e.g., a labeled rectangular box)” (emphasis added). Consequently, 37 C.F.R. 1.83(a) does not require “conventional features illustrated in the drawing as rectangular boxes” be labeled. Rather, 37 C.F.R. 1.83(a) merely suggest that conventional features can be “illustrated in the drawing in the form of a graphical drawing symbol or a labeled representation (e.g., a labeled rectangular box).” Thus, Applicants respectfully request that the drawing objection be withdrawn.

With respect to the claim rejections, Applicants have amended the independent claims 1, 5, 9 and 14 to more clearly distinguish the claimed invention from the cited references. In addition, claim 10 has been canceled and claims 8, 11-13 and 16 have been amended to correct minor informalities. As amended, Applicants respectfully assert that the independent claims 1, 5, 9 and 14 are not anticipated by the cited reference of Steeves and/or the cited reference of Strong et al., as explained below. In view of the claim amendments and the following remarks, Applicants respectfully request that the pending claims 1-9 and 11-17 be allowed.

A. Patentability of Amended Independent Claims 1 and 5

The Office Action has rejected the independent claims 1 and 5 under 35 U.S.C. 102 as allegedly being anticipated by the cited references of Steeves and Strong et al. In response, Applicants have amended the independent claims 1 and 5 to more clearly distinguish the claimed invention from the cited references. As amended, each claimed element of the amended claims 1 and 5 is not disclosed in either Steeves or Strong et al. Thus, Applicants respectfully assert that the amended independent claims 1 and 5 are not anticipated by the cited references of Steeves and Strong et al.

As amended, the independent claim 1 recites the limitations of “*first signal-processing means electrically connected to the first protocol-executing means, the first signal-processing means being adapted to code and decode signals for contactless station-transponder communication, the first signal-processing means being further adapted to modulate and demodulate the signals for the contactless station-transponder communication; second signal-processing means electrically connected to the second protocol-executing means, the second signal-processing means being adapted to code and decode signals for contactless station-station communication, the second signal-processing means being further adapted to modulate and demodulate the signals for the contactless station-station communication; and transmission means electrically connected to the first and second signal-processing means to transmit and receive the signals for the contactless station-transponder communication and the signals for the contactless station-station communication to and from the first and second signal-processing means, the transmission means being adapted to receive and transmit electromagnetic signals for contactless communication with the transponders and the further communication systems,*” which are not disclosed in the cited references of Steeves and Strong et al.

A claim is anticipated only if each and every element as set forth in the claim is found, either expressly or inherently described, in a single prior art reference. *Verdegaal Bros. v. Union Oil of California*, 814 F.2d 628, 631, 2 USPQ2d 1051, 1053 (Fed. Cir. 1987).

As correctly stated on page 3 of the Office Action, the cited reference of Steeves discloses a system 100 including a plurality of readers 101-103 and tags 151-155. The Office Action has equated a transmitter 603 and a receiver 602 of a reader shown in Fig. 6 of Steeves with the claimed *“first protocol-executing means”*. Furthermore, the Office Action has equated a specific processor, as described in column 8, lines 30-40, of Steeves, with the claimed *“second protocol-executing means”*. However, the cited reference of Steeves does not disclose *“first signal-processing means”*, *“second signal-processing means”*, and *“transmission means electrically connected to the first and second signal-processing means to transmit and receive the signals for the contactless station-transponder communication and the signals for the contactless station-station communication to and from the first and second signal-processing means, the transmission means being adapted to receive and transmit electromagnetic signals for contactless communication with the transponders and the further communication systems,”* as recited in the amended independent claim 1. Thus, the amended independent claim 1 is not anticipated by the cited reference of Steeves et al.

As correctly stated on page 4 of the Office Action, the cited reference of Strong et al. discloses a system 100 including a local positioning system (LPS), which includes a plurality of interrogators 6 with antennas 5. In addition, as correctly stated one page 4 of the Office Action, each interrogator 6 communicates with tags 2 using spread-spectrum and the interrogators 6 communicate with each other over an Ethernet local area network using Ethernet protocol. However, the cited reference of Steeves does not disclose *“first signal-processing means”*, *“second signal-processing means”*, and *“transmission means electrically connected to the first and second signal-processing means to transmit and receive the signals for the contactless station-transponder communication and the signals for the contactless station-station communication to and from the first and second signal-processing means, the transmission means being adapted to receive and transmit electromagnetic signals for contactless communication with the transponders and the further communication systems,”* as recited in the amended independent claim 1. Thus, the amended independent claim 1 is also not anticipated by the cited reference of Strong et al. As such, Applicants respectfully request that the amended independent claim 1 be allowed.

The above remarks are also applicable to the amended independent claim 5, which also recites “*first signal-processing means*” and “*second signal-processing means*” with the addition of “*a terminal electrically connected to the first and second signal-processing means to transmit and receive the signals for the contactless station-transponder communication and the signals for the contactless station-station communication to and from the first and second signal-processing means, the terminal being adapted to be connected to transmission means for contactless communication with the transponders and the further communication systems.*”

These limitations are not disclosed in the cited references of Steeves and Strong et al. Thus, the amended independent claim 5 is also not anticipated by the cited references of Steeves and Strong et al. As such, Applicants respectfully request that the amended independent claim 5 be allowed as well.

B. Patentability of Amended Independent Claims 9 and 14

The Office Action has rejected the independent claims 9 and 14 under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as allegedly being anticipated by the cited reference of Strong et al. In response, Applicants have amended the independent claims 9 and 14 to more clearly distinguish the claimed invention from the cited reference of Strong et al. As amended, each claimed element of the amended claims 9 and 14 is not disclosed in the cited reference of Strong et al. Thus, Applicants respectfully assert that the amended independent claims 9 and 14 are not anticipated by the cited reference of Strong et al.

As amended, the independent claim 9 recites the limitations of “*a microprocessor adapted to execute a station-transponder protocol for contactless station-transponder communication with at least one of the transponders and a station-station protocol for contactless station-station communication with at least one of the communication stations, wherein the station-station protocol differs from the station-transponder protocol by at least one protocol parameter, the microprocessor being further adapted to code and decode signals for the contactless station-transponder communication and to code and decode signals for the contactless station-station communication, the microprocessor being further adapted*

to modulate and demodulate the signals for the contactless transponder communication and to modulate and demodulate the signals for the contactless station communication; and transmission means electrically connected to the microprocessor to transmit and receive the signals for the contactless station-transponder communication and the signals for the contactless station-station communication to and from the microprocessor, the transmission means being adapted to receive and transmit electromagnetic signals for contactless communication with the transponders and the communication systems,” which are not disclosed in the cited reference of Strong et al.

A claim is anticipated only if each and every element as set forth in the claim is found, either expressly or inherently described, in a single prior art reference. *Verdegaal Bros. v. Union Oil of California*, 814 F.2d 628, 631, 2 USPQ2d 1051, 1053 (Fed. Cir. 1987).

As stated above, the cited reference of Strong et al. does not disclose “*first signal-processing means*”, “*second signal-processing means*”, and “*transmission means electrically connected to the first and second signal-processing means to transmit and receive the signals for the contactless station-transponder communication and the signals for the contactless station-station communication to and from the first and second signal-processing means, the transmission means being adapted to receive and transmit electromagnetic signals for contactless communication with the transponders and the further communication systems,*” as recited in the amended independent claim 1. The amended independent claim 9 recites “*a microprocessor*” that is similar to the “*first signal-processing means*” and “*second signal-processing means*” of the amended independent claim 1. The amended independent claim 9 also recites “*transmission means*” that is similar to the “*transmission means*” of the amended independent claim 1. Thus, the amended independent claim 9 is also not anticipated by the cited reference of Strong et al. As such, Applicants respectfully request that the amended independent claim 9 be allowed.

The above remarks are also applicable to the amended independent claim 14, which recites similar limitations as the amended independent claim 9. Thus, the

amended independent claim 14 is also not anticipated by the cited reference of Strong et al. As such, Applicants respectfully request that the amended independent claim 14 be allowed as well.

C. Patentability of Dependent Claims 2-4, 6-8, 11-13 and 15-17

Each of the dependent claims 2-4, 6-8, 11-13 and 15-17 depends on one of the amended independent claims 1, 5, 9 and 14. As such, these dependent claims include all the limitations of their respective base claims. Therefore, Applicants submit that these dependent claims are allowable for at least the same reasons as their respective base claims.

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the claims in view of the remarks made herein. A notice of allowance is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,
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